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THE ESTATES OF R. JUDAH HA-NASI

AND THE JEWISH COMMUNITIES IN THE TRANS-JORDANIC REGION

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בותניין and גבלונה .1

R. Huna, according to the Palestinian Talmud, was willing to permit the cultivation of the fields of uring the sabbatical year. His colleague R. Mana refused to subscribe to this decision, and his procedure was approved of the following day by another scholar who informed him that the estate in question belonged formerly to Rabbi, who obtained it on lease from Antonine; wherefore it was Jewish property and subject to the same law as Syria, where it was allowed, during the sabbatical year, to eat the produce but not to cultivate the fields.

The scholars who have delved into the problem of Antonine and Rabbi have, of course, also drawn this narrative into the field of their investigation. It has received special attention at the hands of S. Krauss in his work

¹ p. Sheb. 6, I (36d, 1. 24).

² A similar procedure is found in p. Ket. 1, 2 (25b, 1. 16), where R. Mana refuses his assent to a legal decision rendered by R. Ḥanina; comp. here א' לר' מונא שב וחתום א and in p. Ket. מונא שב וחתום (on this passage see Bacher, ApA. (= Agada der palāstinischen Amorāer), III, 447).

³ The estate has הרין אלפין דשנין which Krauss (p. 18) endeavors to explain by the Syr. שׁננא "cultivated land." Löw (Talm. Arch., II, 540, note 75) puts two interrogation marks to this explanation.

"Antoninus und Rabbi," p. 17 ff. He ventures to identify the locality בלונה, where Rabbi's possessions lay, with modern 'Abellin situated not far (north-westerly) from the Battof plain. He considers it beyond any doubt that all the possessions of Rabbi are to be found only in Galilee.

To begin with, the identification of יבלתה with 'Abellin surely lacks foundation. 'Abellin corresponds to another locality of the talmudic literature: אבלין (abbreviated, probably in the singular, אבלין), and hence cannot be the same as יבלתה (in which, according to Krauss, the is original as in יבלתה, p. 23). Moreover, there is no other place in Galilee which could be identified with יבלתה.

But is it indeed impossible for Rabbi to have had his estates outside of Galilee? Krauss, to be sure, considers it impossible, rejecting even Hildesheimer's very plausible identification of יבלונה with נבלונה, i. e. Gaulanitis. Let us, however, examine minutely the above-cited passage in order to ascertain the exact facts.

The passage in the Palestinian Talmud referred to treats of several cities and provinces which, although situated on the verge of the Holy Land, still in certain respects belong to the foreign zone. Immediately preceding are Bozrah, Tyre, then Ammon and Moab. This connection shows that we are to seek also יבלונה outside of Palestinian territory proper, by all means outside of Galilee.

⁴ Wien 1910.

⁵ p. 18.

⁶ On the Battof plain, Hebr. בקעת בית נטופה, see my conclusions in Mitteil. u. Nachr. des Deutschen Palästina-Vereins, 1908, p. 33 ff.; further Beiträge zur Geographie und Geschichte Galiläas, p. 54, note 1, and p. 83.

⁷ Comp. my Beiträge, p. 28, n. 4.

⁸ Beiträge zur Geogr. Pal., p. 55, n. 395.

⁹ Comp. also further below.

How indeed could R. Huna have permitted the cultivation of the fields in user during the sabbatical year if those fields were situated in Middle Galilee, the Jewish territory proper? And even if Rabbi had the land on lease from Antonine, yet originally it was surely Jewish property, and in this case such a permission is simply impossible.¹⁰

However, there is also direct proof that Rabbi owned an estate outside of Galilee, in כותניין of which a passage speaks as being the opposite (בותניין there) of Galilee (בותניין here). Thus the locality involved here is by all means outside of Galilee, which is also confirmed by the contents of the passage, as we shall soon see. Krauss, it is true, looks also for כותניין in Galilee and is ready to identify it with בפר עותני which is written once —no doubt corruptly— מבר בנותני (the y at the beginning of the word giving rise to בותניין. But apart from the impossibility of the explanation — במר בנותני — כותניין it must be

¹⁰ As I see now, Grünhut is of the same opinion in the *Israelit*, 1911, No. 20, p. 12. He identifies יבלונה with *Gebalane*, south-east of the Dead Sea. But this territory is known in the talmudic literature as גבלא! See Hildesheimer, *Beiträge*, p. 55, n. 392.

ים p. Ma'aser sheni 4, ז (54d, l. 8): בהרא המין הכא פירין הכא ופירין. This statement comes from R. Jonah who is named several lines before (beginning of the Gemara). It is noteworthy that the same R. Jonah also makes the statement concerning Rabbi's possessions in יבלונה. As to אם comp. Bacher, ApA., II, 176, n. 10 (p. Ma'aser sheni, beginning, 54d).

¹² p. 21 ff.

¹⁸ p. Hallah 4, 4 (59d, 1. 58); in the parallel passages (Tos. Bekorot 7, 3, and Bekorot 55a) the reading is correct כ' עותני.

¹⁴ Krauss writes p. 21: "... so dass ohne jeden Zweifel לוחניין die abgekürzte Form von מוחניין darstellt." The form ל (with) at the end) is never found, and according to the etymology given by Krauss in MGWI., LI, 59 (abbreviated form of ממורי a cannot stand at the end of the word. On page 22, note 1, he explains the] as == צפורי

pointed out that 'was really not situated in Galilee, but rather at the confines of Galilee and Samaria (sixteen miles distant from Sepphoris), and, furthermore, that the inhabitants of that place were Samaritans. Would Rabbi have had his estate in a Samaritan locality? This is hardly to be imagined.

Introducing a slight change of ב to ב, on the basis of the editio princeps, we should rather read בותניין, thus obtaining the name of Batanaea, as indeed the same phenomenon of miswriting מחניים to בחניים appears in another passage where Batanæa is meant. The basalt soil of Batanæa is known to be very fruitful, and thus we understand that Rabbi exported to Batanæa his produce which grew in Galilee, where prices were high, in order to pay tithes at a lower rate. If Rabbi, as seen from the above, had an estate in Batanæa, he could very well have one in Gaulanitis. But we shall soon see that Rabbi's estate in Batanæa is identical with that in Gaulanitis. However, be-

. But this is a plural form, and the plural ending cannot be added to a proper name as עתני = עתניאל.

¹⁵ Comp. my Beiträge, p. 29, n. 2.

¹⁶ See Dalman, *Aram. Wbch.*, 201b: "בותניין (p. Ma'as. sch. 54d, Ausg. Ven. בותניין) 1. (בותניין)

¹⁷ Targum Ps.-Jonathan to Gen. 10, 19; such is also the explanation of Krauss in *Lehnwörter*, II, 284, that כותניים כותניים. He writes me however (Oct. 2, 1910): "Ich habe die Erklärung gestissentlich aufgegeben, weil ich an Batanäa nicht denken mag." But in the light of my remarks, the connection with Batanæa is quite plausible.

¹⁸ Buhl, Geogr. des alten Pal., p. 117.

¹⁹ Most propably also in p. Ma'as. 4, 5 בחניון בת ניין Batanæa. Dalman, Aram. Wbch., 64b, quotes the following forms: בּוּחָנִיץ, בּוּחָנִין בּוּחָנִן for Baravaia. The Targumim, as is well known, render מתנן בּוֹלְנוֹן (e. g. Ps. 68, 16. 23: בּוּחָנֵן).

fore ascertaining this fact, we must still inquire whether Gaulanitis had Jewish inhabitants during Rabbi's lifetime.

Gaulanitis was the name given to the region of the city Γανλανη (Josephus)20 or Γανλων (Eusebius),21 i. e. the biblical jii (Deut. 4, 43; Josh. 10, 8). This place is generally and justly identified with the locality Sahem ejjolan situated amid "well-watered surroundings" in the transjordanic region (east of Jamle = גמלא).22 The city was certainly important in the second century, since it struck its own coins. The Tosefta mentions the coins of alongside of those of Sepphoris and Tiberias, and the connection in which the name occurs suggests that Jews lived there.24 The territory of Golan is also mentioned in the Mishnah. The passage in view proves likewise that Jews resided there, for the devastation of the fruitful land of גבלן is alluded to as token of the Messianic era in addition to the divine judgment inflicted upon the great assembly house (בית הועד) and Galilee.25 Towards the end of the third or the beginning of the fourth century we hear again of a Jewish settlement in the city Gaulon which of course also had a synagogue.26 The Amora R.

²⁰ e. g. Ant. IV, 53 (see Böttger, Topogr. hist. Lexicon, 127).

²¹ Onom. 64, 1. 7 (ed. Klostermann); see also Thomsen, Loca sancta, 50, s. v. Γανλανη.

²² Buhl, 247.

²⁸ Comp. for a later period Eusebius: κωμη μεγιστη.

²⁴ Tos. Ma'as. sheni 4, 13 (94, 1. 17): נותן אדם לחבירו גולנית ונוטל . מים מסיבירו גולנית מברית מברית and מיל ציפורית מברית מ

²⁵ M. Sotah 9, 15: בית ועד יהיה לזנות והגליל יחרב והגבלן ישום ; in b. Sanh. 97a as 'תניא ר' יהודה א'.

 $^{^{26}}$ p. Meg. $_{(73d,\ 1.\ 65)}$: בכושא הבין יהבין המחין אזל לגוולנה אזל לגוולנה המחין בכושא (מקושא בו [r. מקושא]. The right reading is מקושא (comp. Rabbenu Nissim on Alfasi) and it means "knocker" or "bell,"

Jeremiah residing in Tiberias once paid a visit to the city which is named now נולנה and then נובלנה —and rendered there a religious decision.27 If therefore towards the end of the third or the beginning of the fourth century there was still a Jewish community in Gaulon, its existence during Rabbi's lifetime is to be assumed without further hesitation.—Rabbi owned, as indicated above, an estate in Batanæa. But the biblical גוולן, i. e. the talmudic סר מולנה or גובלנה, is situated in בַּשֵׁן, as also Josephus and Eusebius make mention of Gaulon in Batanæa. Thus it can hardly be doubted any longer that in the passage of the Palestinian Talmud cited at the beginning of this paper we are to read ובלונה (or יבלונה) instead of יבלונה and that under it not Gaulanitis28 is meant but the city Gaulon itself which was located in Batanæa. Rabbi's estate was situated in Batanæa, more precisely in or near the city Gaulon. The form of the name גבלונה corresponds exactly to the Γαυλων of Eusebius (the π at the end $= \kappa$ of the st. emphaticus). The miswriting of ' to ' in the beginning of a word is quite possible and is met also in another local name.20

נינוה 2.

In the vicinity of Gaulon there were also other Jewish communities during Rabbi's lifetime, as will be shown subsequently.

comp. p. Beşah 5, 2: חות הדתא הדתא הכנישתא מקושה לכר ר' יצחק סבא מקושה ר', such is the correct reading; comp Mordecai on Beşah 5, No. מרצ"ו.

מתורייא (Abodah zarah 2,4 (41c above): פיתמיה אזל לגובלנה הורי באיליו (πιθάριον = pitcher) פיתורייא.

This happened no doubt during his stay in Gaulon which is mentioned in p. Meg.—As this passage in p. Ab. z. shows, also non-Jews lived there, hence the place is surely Gaulon (and must not be sought in Galilee).

²⁸ As assumed by Hildesheimer, 55, n. 395, and Bacher, ApA., III, 101.

²⁹ p. Mo'ed k. 3, 82a (middle): "T" r. "T"; see my Beiträge, p. 80, n. 3.

Both Talmuds relate that the inhabitants of נינוה directed a query to Rabbi concerning the ritual to be used while fasting and praying for rain. As regards עינוה we are naturally prone to think of the old biblical Nineveh, thou tasking ourselves how a Jewish community could exist towards the end of the second century in a city which had long lain in ruins. But even assuming the possibility of the existence of a Jewish community in Nineveh, could not the inhabitants of that city find a Jewish scholar nearer home (in Babylonia) who would have offered them information concerning the above-mentioned query? It would have certainly been unnecessary to go all the way to Sepphoris in order to ask Rabbi for a decision.

All these difficulties disappear when we know that there was a נינוה also in Palestine, which is usually abbreviated to יינוה but also occurs as יינוה a number of times.³² This is modern Nawā north of Gaulon (Saḥem ej-jōlan) which was erected³³ from the ruins of the ancient city or יינוה, known to Greek and Roman writers as Nevy, 34 but also as Nineveh.³⁵ Eusebius says of Nineveh that it is a

³⁰ p. Ber. 5, 2 (9b), p. Taan. 1, 1 (63d, 1.35): בנינוה צרכון (ל) מיעכד המבילון (שיילון) לרבי אמר לון ר' לכו ועשו ובלבד תענית בתר פסחא אתון ושאלון (שיילון) לרבי אמר לון ר' לכו ועשו ובלבד שלחו ליה בני נינוה לרבי כגון אנן :b. Taan. 14b; שלחו ליה בני נינוה לרבי כגון אנן דאפילו בתקופת תמוז בעינן מטרא היכי געביד וכו'

³¹ Berliner, Beiträge zur Geographie und Ethnographie Babyloniens etc., p. 53, s. v. Berliner remarks however: "Ob das alte biblische N. hier gemeint sei, ist sehr zweifelhaft." Krauss (Talm. Arch., II, 151, and 532, n. 16) refers the cited localities to the Nineveh which is "outside of Palestine."

³² Comp. further below; see also Jerome *Onom.*, 137, l. 3: "Ninive in angulo Arabiae quam nunc corrupte Neneven vocant." Bacher, ApA., III, 510, note, puts "Neven" instead of "Neneven," the former corresponding to the Hebrew 712.

³³ Thomsen, Loca sancta, 94.

³¹ See text, § 1 f.

Jewish city. This statement is confirmed by a number of talmudic passages as well as the ancient monuments discovered at Nawā. That Jews lived in Nawā and its suburbs during the second century is proved by an ordinance contained in the Tosefta (to be discussed below) which frees that region from the impost on agricultural products.—Among a number of Palestinian cities whose Jewish inhabitants were often harassed by the Roman legions stationed within their boundaries mention is also made of nu. Turning Furthermore, several learned men of Nawā are mentioned in the talmudic literature: R. Pelatiah of Nawā (third century); R. Tanḥum of Nawā who is identical with the famous haggadist R. Tanḥuma (fourth century); R. Shela (or Saul) of Nawā (fourth century). R. Judan, an Amora of the fourth century whose domicile

⁸⁵ Buhl, 247; Bädeker, 140.

³⁶ Πολις Ιουδαιων.

 $^{^{37}}$ Among the ornaments there the seven-branched candlestick has been discovered (Buhl, ib.).

³⁸ Tos. Sheb. 3 (4), 9 (p. 66); p. Demai 2, 1 (22d).

צריו כמו חלמיש לנוה קסטרא לחיפה סוסיתא לטבריה יריחו לנוערן לוד לאונו ביו חלמיש לנוה קסטרא לחיפה סוסיתא לטבריה יריחו לנוערן לוד לאונו כמו חלמיש לנוה קסטרא לחיפה סוסיתא לטבריה יריחו לנוערן לוד לאונו כמו חלמיש לנוה קסטרא לחיפה סוסיתא לטבריה יריחו לנוערן לוד לאונו כמו חלמיש היא הארץ, 111, 78, n. 4.— ארץ is possibly (comp. Schwarz, חבואות הארץ, 126a, Lemberg 1865) identical with Aere ($A\iota\rho\eta$) which was 30 Roman miles distant from N. (see Thomsen, Loca sancta, p. 16, s. v.) and is known to-day as E_s -sanamēn. Π means "flint" and we shall see subsequently that in the vicinity of Nawā there was also another place with a similar appellation.—As to אסטרא (Haifa) see Hildersheimer, Beiträge, p. 8, n. 63. סוסיתא (Thomsen, 73), modern Sūsiye. Concerning נוערן see Thomsen, 93, s. v. Neapa. Lod and Ono are biblical localities (see Buhl, 196 f.).

⁴⁰ Bacher, III, 617, No. 79.

⁴¹ Bacher, ib., 508 ff.—508, n. 2: the Munich MS. reads b. Shab. 30a:

⁴² Ib., 749, No. 93.

was in Tiberias, escaped to Nawā⁴⁰ (probably on account of the persecutions under Gallus). As we learn from another source, the residents of Nawā were oppressed severely about that time, so that the scholars of Nawā (רבנן דנוה) had to give them permission to bake bread during the feast of Passover. The passages cited thus far satisfactorily prove that there was a Jewish community in ס נונות from the second to the fourth century. The people of נינות who directed a query to Rabbi were no doubt residents of this transjordanic city.

The above-mentioned ordinance concerning the exemption of several localities in the vicinity of Nawa from the tax on agricultural products is—as Büchler has proved beyond any shadow of doubt—to be ascribed to Rabbi.45 The motives that actuated Rabbi to render this decision can also be surmised. In the passage already cited it is stated that the inhabitants of the city had to fast for rain quite often even after Passover. This, of course, was chiefly due to the climatic conditions of that region,46 but then it was also due to the fact that the territory of Nawa was stony to the north and east, " so that lack of rain could become fatal to the farmers. Rabbi undoubtedly convinced himself personally of these conditions. Since his estate was located in this region, he probably came there very often. During one of his visits to his estate, the residents of Nawa no doubt came to him with the question concerning the fasting for rain; for the statement in the

⁴³ p. Ket. 11, 1 (34b) ר' יורן ברח לנוי (comp. Bacher, ib., 238 f.).

⁴⁴ p. Sanh. 3 end (21b): הכנן דנוה הורו מפי חמיע בפסחא.

⁴⁵ JQR., XIII, 700 ff.

⁴⁶ Comp. e. g. Exner in *ZDPV.*, 1910, p. 129: "Es nimmt... der Niederschlag vom Jordanthal gegen Osten, zur Wüste hin, ziemlich rasch an Intensität ab."

⁴⁷ See Buhl, 1. c.

Palestinian Talmud leaves the impression that the people of Nawā came to Rabbi in person: אתו שיילין לרבי, and Rabbi replied: לכו ועשו, "go ye, and perform the fasting, only do not change the wording of the prayer."—The patriarch R. Judah I is found on journeys also on other occasions. While in Simonias (Galilee), the inhabitants came to him with a request (האתון לגביה). Rabbi had thus become aware that through the payment of a tax on agricultural products unbearable burdens were placed on the Jews living there, and since, in addition, that region was situated outside the Jewish territory, he exempted the immediate surroundings of the city from taxation, as he also rendered a similar decision in regard to another transjordanic locality. The same in the products are producted as a similar decision in regard to another transjordanic locality.

אַחוּם נָוָה .3

Some of the localities situated in the Nawā zone can be pointed out even to-day. The Baraita names the following seven places:

- וור, now probably Sureye, north-east of Nawā.51
- 2. צייר, now perhaps Teraya, south of Sureye.52
- 3. גשמו (or גושמי) is no doubt the Jasim of to-day, north of Nawā. ⁵⁸

⁴⁸ Comp. for example Gen. r., c. 78, § 15; at Akko; Tanhuma וישב, § 3; at Caesarea; see Krauss, Anton. und Rabbi, p. 40 f.

⁴⁹ Gen. r., c. 81, § 2; p. Yeb. 12 (13a), comp. b. Yeb. 105a; Tanhuma, און, § 5 (ed. B., § 7). As to סימוניא comp. my conclusions in *MGWJ*., p. 16-78.

⁵⁰ Tos. Sheb. 4, 10 (66, l. 5); p. Demai 2, 1 (22, l. 55); p. doday \$\$samah\$ on the southern shore of the sea of Galilee (comp. Buhl, 243).

⁵¹ See the map by Fisher-Guthe. The name probably means "rock," comp. above.

⁵² See the same map.

⁵³ Ib.

- 4. יויון is Zeizūn, north of Jamle (גמלא), southwest of Nawā.[™]
- 5. שנרי חטם, i. e. "heaps of stone of חטם." הטם corresponds perhaps to Aṭamān, north of Derʿāt; be yet this place seems to be too distant from Nawā to be placed in its zone.
- 6. דנב חרבתא; if this reading is correct the place could be identified with Ed-dunēbe, east of Nawā.
 - 7. (חרב) is beyond identification.

Nawā and its immediate surroundings were properly included in the land of Israel; it is for this reason that priests, who even in the third century still adhered strictly to the laws of purity, were allowed to reside there. The question was only how far this region stretched and where the "outside" began. In order to ascertain this the priests interrogated R. Johanan who informed them in the name of an older Amora that on the "way from Nawā, "The outermost point." It is impossible to identify this "The outermost point." It is impossible to identify this "The outermost point." for the latter was called Edre'i also in the talmudic period. The odoubt corresponds to Δοροα occurring in inscriptions, the which is known to-day as

⁵⁴ See the "Engl. map."—Another Zeizūn is situated north-west of Der'āt (Fischer-Guthe's map). The place lies, however, at too great a distance from Nawā.

⁵⁵ Comp. יגר שהדותא (Gen. 31, 48).

⁵⁶ Fischer-Guthe's map; see also Farrer, ZDPV., XIII, p. 200.

⁵⁷ F.-G.'s map.

יותנן פאלון לר' יותנן : אהן חומא דנייא שאלון לר' יותנן : אהן אהן הומא בהנייא שאלון לר' יותנן בשם ר' חוניא דברת חוורין נהגין כהנייא מטיי עד [r. דנווה הוא דפרדים עד דפרדים עד דפרדים אין יותנן דפרדים א

⁵⁹ As Neubauer, p. 255, thinks.

⁶⁰ Comp. Hildesheimer, Beiträge, p. 57, note 420; Bacher ApA., III, 751, No. 95.

⁶¹ Thomsen, Loca sancta, I, 56, s. v.; ZDPV., 1910, p. 42.

Ed-dūr and is located south-east of Nawā. ⁶² The other extreme point in the vicinity of Nawā, on the "way from Bozrah," namely פֿרדים, cannot be identified to-day. The name probably designates a garden adjacent to Nawā.